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SUBJECT: Rio Radar - September 18, 2009

¶1. Rio Radar is a weekly compilation of key economic, political, commercial, and other developments in the states of Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, Minas Gerais, Espirito Santo, and Sergipe. This week's subjects:

RIO MAYOR WANTS FURTHER COOPERATION WITH USG

¶2. (U) On September 11, Principal Officer met with Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes. The mayor, who has an Ambassador-level diplomat seconded from the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on his International Relations staff, expressed interest in working with Post on a range of initiatives. "I do not need financial assistance," he said, "I am looking to work with the United States through institutional partnerships and collaboration." Paes and PO agreed to work together to develop a joint list for such initiatives.

TSA FINDS NO PROBLEMS AT RIO'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

¶3. (U) A team from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) visited Rio de Janeiro's Antonio Carlos Jobim International Airport (GIG) from September 14-18 to exchange technical information with officials from the Brazilian National Civil Aviation Authority (ANAC) and Brazilian airport operator INFRAERO related to ICAO standards, as well as evaluate passenger and cargo commercial aircraft operations that have direct flight services to the U.S. According to the Buenos Aires-based TSA regional representative, who also participated in the visit, all evaluations and meetings were successful. "We were very impressed and pleased by everything ANAC and INFRAERO have done on security," he explained.

ARMY GENERAL SUGGESTS ARMY SOLDIERS HELP PACIFY FAVELAS

¶4. (U) During a September 18 seminar hosted by Brazilian development bank BNDES entitled "Opportunities for Favelas," Brazilian Army General Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro (retired) stated the Brazilian Army was prepared to cooperate with Rio de Janeiro state and municipal officials and police to occupy and maintain control of favelas (Note: Rio de Janeiro state currently maintains special police units -UPP - that are controlling five favelas. End Note). Citing the Brazilian army's role in United Nations Peacekeeping operations in Haiti, he said many officers and units were specifically trained and prepared to undertake operations related to public security and general policing in communities lacking state control.

CONTROVERSIAL FALELA WALL NEARS COMPLETION

¶5. (U) The construction of a concrete wall around the Rio favela Santa Marta is 90 percent concluded and scheduled to be completed by the end of October 2009, according to the director of the Rio de Janeiro state Public Constructions Company (EMOP). While proponents of the construction argue the wall is needed to thwart expansion of the favela into the surrounding rain forest, critics decry the initiative as unconstitutional. A community leader from Santa Marta, Jos Mario dos Santos, told us on September 18 that his community was totally against the construction of the wall and considered it an act of discrimination by Rio State. Rosino de Castro Diniz, president of the Federation of Rio de Janeiro Favela Associations also criticized the project, stating, "Favela residents need basic services from the government, not walls."

PETROBRAS TO BUILD A PRE-SALT INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER

¶6. (U) Petrobras is investing 10 million USD to build an international research center dedicated to pre-salt oil reserve development. Petrobras and Schlumberger signed an agreement on

September 10 to jointly develop the center, which will be built in a technological park situated on the Rio de Janeiro Federal University (UFRJ) campus.

RIO DE JANEIRO PORT REVITALIZATION

¶7. (U) During a September 14-15 seminar entitled "Rio de Janeiro Port Revitalization," participants stressed relations between the Rio de Janeiro state and municipal governments, as well as with the federal government, was the principal factor to successfully develop the port of Rio de Janeiro. Municipal Secretary for Development Felipe Goes said the current political environment offered a "magic moment" that could facilitate port revitalization, thanks to unprecedented strong ties between the Rio and Brasilia. The project, to occur in two phases, has an estimated budget of 3.2 billion Brazilian Reals (1.7 million USD).

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